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SUBJECT: IRAN - BRV VIEWS ON UNSCR 1737

REF: 06 STATE 202585

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT DOWNES FOR 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) PolCouns delivered the points on UN Security Council Resolution 1737 regarding Iran's nuclear and missile programs (reftel) to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director for North American and Multilateral Affairs Yaneth Arocha. Uncharacteristically for the Bolivarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arocha provided a substantive response to the demarche. While most of her lengthy response could be better characterized as a critique of U.S. policy in Iraq, Arocha said the BRV viewed Iran's nuclear energy program and international concerns with it, as a very grave matter. She noted that Venezuela was fully aware of its international obligations under the United Nations system, but did not believe that the UN Security Council was the proper venue for discussions of Iran's nuclear development program. She also said the BRV was surprised by the timing of the resolution, expecting discussions in the UN Security Council to have been more lengthy.

¶2. (C) Notwithstanding our explanation that the UNSC acted unanimously, only after all other mechanisms had been exhausted, Arocha said Venezuela continued to believe that the IAEA was the proper forum to discuss Iran and the BRV felt negotiations were better vehicles for resolving this issue than sanctions at this point. Repeating her government's position that there was more space for negotiation, she ended by noting that the BRV felt strongly both that all nations had a right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and that there was not enough evidence that Iran intends to use its program for non-peaceful purposes.

¶3. (C) PolCouns reinforced reftel points regarding the existing international consensus that Iran's nuclear program extends far beyond merely peaceful energy purposes. He also emphasized the BRV's obligation to implement, rather than just be aware of its international obligations under the United Nations system.

WHITAKER